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I'm very grateful for this opportunity to brief the Committee on what was and was not achieved at the UN summit two weeks ago, and how the Secretary-General sees the way ahead on reform. Mr. Chairman, we deeply appreciate the interest that you and your colleagues, particularly Congressman Lantos, have shown in helping us to make the UN a stronger and more effective instrument in the hands of the world's peoples.

I'm also very glad to be following Ambassador Bolton, with whom – as with representatives of other member states – the Secretary-General has been working very closely on all these issues.

Let me begin by expressing my sympathy, which I know is shared by all my colleagues at the UN, for all the many Americans who have suffered bereavement, injury or hardship as a result of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The entire international community has been saddened by the loss of life and devastation.

The American people have always been generous in helping the victims of disasters in other parts of the world, and now the world has responded in kind. Offers of assistance came in from more than 136 countries. During the UN summit there were many expressions of sympathy and solidarity from the leaders of other countries. Even some very poor countries offered what they could, out of solidarity and concern for those affected, and the UN itself has contributed to the humanitarian effort. UNICEF provided two planeloads of education and recreation kits for children. Experts from the World Health Organization worked with their counterparts at the Centers for Disease Control to register displaced persons and track the support provided to them. And logistics staff have served in Baton Rouge, Denton, Little Rock, Arlington and other staging areas, including the U.S.S. Iwo Jima, in part to coordinate the reception and dispatch of international assistance.

In short, we have been doing whatever we can to help, and we wish the American people strength and courage as they continue the recovery and reconstruction effort.

But let me return to today's agenda. The UN summit was noteworthy, not because of the record attendance of heads of state, or the ambitiousness of the agenda, but rather because of what was achieved, and what was started.

In March, when the Secretary-General proposed an agenda for the summit, he deliberately set the bar high, since in international negotiations you never get everything you ask. He also presented the reforms as a package, meaning not that he expected them to be adopted without change but that advances in all the four main areas – development, security, human rights, UN reform – were more likely to be achieved together than piecemeal, precisely because states have different priorities, and are more likely to overcome their reservations on some issues if they see serious attention being given to others to which they assign a higher priority. To be quite specific, the US and others who share the same reform agenda were not going to get what they wanted on management reform, on human rights or on terrorism, unless they showed sensitivity to the views of those many governments for whom development is the overriding priority – and vice versa.

In the end that did happen, but not to the extent that we originally hoped. On many issues there are substantive differences among member states which are still unresolved; and there is also a regrettable amount of mistrust, which often makes it hard to reach consensus on language even when there is really not much of substance in dispute. Even the phrase “UN reform” sometimes arouses suspicion among many of the moderate, democratic governments who in fact support most of the specific items on our agenda.

But after some very tense negotiations in the weeks and days before the summit, we came out with a document which does mark an important step forward, and is a good basis for further progress, in areas to which the US government, and this Committee in particular, rightly attach importance – I am thinking especially of management reform, human rights, and terrorism.

Management reform

Secretary-General Kofi Annan has said many times that “reform is a process, not an event”, and Ambassador Bolton has now given us his own, pithier version of that aphorism: “reform is not a one-night stand”.

So it was probably never realistic to imagine that we would get all the necessary reforms enacted at one sitting. We would have liked an explicit sentence, spelling out that the Secretary-General needs the authority and flexibility to manage the Organization within his budget, and within a clear political mandate given to him by member states, so that he can be held meaningfully responsible and accountable for the results. We didn’t get that, but we did get a request for him to come back to the General Assembly with proposals on the conditions and measures necessary for him to carry out his managerial responsibilities effectively, and we did get a green light to move ahead on virtually all the specific changes that he had requested:

1. The Secretary-General was given a clear instruction by the summit to scrupulously apply the existing standards of conduct, and develop a code of ethics which will extend beyond the Secretariat to embrace the entire UN system.
2. His intention to create an independent ethics office was recognized – and I’m glad to tell you that just yesterday he formally approved this.
3. Member states committed themselves to additional reforms to ensure that the UN makes more efficient use of its financial and human resources.
4. They asked the Secretary-General to make recommendations to ensure that the policies and rules governing the UN’s budgetary, financial and human resources respond to the Organization’s current needs and enable it to work efficiently and effectively.
5. They undertook to review all mandates more than five years old, and have asked the Secretary-General for an analysis and recommendations to enable both the review itself and the decisions arising from it to be taken during 2006.
6. They also asked him for a framework for a one-time buyout of staff.
7. They resolved, as a matter of urgency, to significantly strengthen the UN’s internal oversight body and ensure its operational independence.
8. They asked the Secretary-General to submit an independent external evaluation of the entire oversight and management system of the UN, including its specialized agencies, so

that measures to improve it can be taken by the General Assembly during its current session “at the earliest possible stage”.

9. They also asked him to make detailed proposals for a new independent oversight advisory committee.
10. And they gave strong support to his policy of zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN personnel, while encouraging him to submit proposals for a comprehensive approach to assistance for the victims of such abuse by the end of this year.

In short, they have given us a lot to do in a short time, and we have already started work. Just yesterday, the Secretary-General chaired the first joint meeting of the Policy and Management committees – the two bodies that I told you he was setting up the last time I had the opportunity to brief you, and which are both now up and running. The purpose of that joint meeting was to draw up a plan and a timetable for implementing and following up all the instructions that member states have now given us. So in the next few weeks we will be working hard to review almost sixty years of mandates, and all the budget and human resource rules and regulations. Amazing as it may seem, such reviews have never been done before in the history of the UN. I believe if we do them properly, and if member states who really care about reform play their full part when the Secretary-General comes back to the Assembly with recommendations, we will now achieve a long overdue house-cleaning of the Organization.

If all these reforms are carried out, they should enable us to streamline and prioritize all our activities, deploying resources where they are most needed to carry out today’s most urgent tasks, and recruiting staff with the skills to carry out those tasks, while also backing up the measures that are already in hand to enforce greater accountability and transparency, with more rigorous standards of ethics, throughout the Organization.

The lessons of the Oil for Food Program, the exhaustive and unprecedented review by the Volcker Inquiry, this Committee and others here in the Congress, and bipartisan initiatives such as the Gingrich/Mitchell report, have served to galvanize the reform efforts the Secretary-General has attempted to advance throughout his tenure. Many of the changes already made by the Secretary-General on his own authority – such as the creation of an ethics office, the new rules to protect whistle-blowers, improving procurement practices, and the creation of separate policy and management committees at the top – are aimed precisely at remedying the deficiencies revealed by the oil-for-food scandal.

The same goes for the decisions of the summit. Indeed, I doubt if we would ever have got the majority of member states to accept the urgency of management reform without the scandal and the various investigations into it. As the Secretary-General himself told the Security Council on September 7 – the day it was published – Mr. Volcker’s fullest and most recent report “ripped away the curtain, and shone a harsh light into the most unsightly corners” of the UN.

Earlier this year, this House adopted your legislation which included a call for creation of a new Chief Operating Officer. This idea was echoed in Paul Volcker’s report, and the Secretary-General has indicated his support for it. I am sure the US and other countries will take it up, and we may well see a specific proposal to create such a post brought forward during the current session of the General Assembly.

Let me assure you, in any case, that we in the Secretariat will follow up on every one of Mr. Volcker's recommendations, and will propose measures either to implement them directly, or, where appropriate, to ensure that we reach the same objective by other means.

But management reform is, of course, only a means to an end. I know you are also interested in the UN's substantive agenda. Let me now say a few words about the summit's outcome in some of the other areas that I know are of interest to you.

Human Rights and Democracy

Last March, when the Secretary-General decided to recommend that the Commission on Human Rights be replaced by a new Human Rights Council, some greeted his proposal as bold and visionary, while others called it unrealistic. So the summit took a major step forward, by agreeing on the need to establish the Council as soon as possible. The Commission's days are numbered.

That said, member states have left themselves a lot of work in the coming months to define the specific parameters of the new Council. It is vital that nations which really care about human rights, including of course the US, be fully engaged in negotiations to see this through.

Meanwhile, please don't overlook the very important progress the summit did make on other areas of human rights – notably the "responsibility to protect". For the first time the entire UN membership, at the highest level, has accepted clearly that it has a collective responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. I believe this is a historic decision, which can help us to respond more rapidly, and more effectively, to the Bosnias and Rwandas, and indeed the Darfurs, of the future.

Of course it's a decision in principle. An enormous political effort will still be needed to ensure that we act on this principle in specific situations. But no one can argue any longer that such horrific crimes are internal affairs, which concern only the people and government of the nation in which they happen. In that respect, at least, we have entered a new and better era.

I should like to thank members of this Committee, particularly yourself, Mr. Chairman, and members such as Congressman Lantos and Congressman Smith, for the untiring support you have given to the principle of strengthening the UN's commitment to the protection of fundamental human rights. What this body says on human rights echoes across the world. And as a result of the summit, member countries also took the decision to double the capacity and budget of the UN's human rights machinery, which was previously only 2 per cent of the UN budget as a whole. I think if we all keep our eye on the ball and do not relax our vigilance, there is real hope that in the coming years the UN will remove the blemish that has disfigured its otherwise valuable work in this area, and at last come to be seen as the effective force for human rights around the world that its founders intended it to be.

Let me also remind you that the UN Democracy Fund, which President Bush first suggested when he spoke in the General Assembly last year, has now been set up and has already received pledges of over \$42 million from 15 countries, including \$10 million from the US. This will enable the UN to do much more to help create and strengthen democratic institutions in countries making the difficult transition from civil conflict, or authoritarian rule.

Peacebuilding

In that context I should also mention another important decision of the summit – the creation of a Peacebuilding Commission. I believe this body will be of great value to the US, since it will make it easier for you to share with other countries and institutions the burden of supporting reconstruction and recovery, and preventing a relapse into violence, in places like Liberia, Haiti and Sudan where peace and stability are not only a crying human need but also an important security interest for America and the rest of the world. This Commission will be operational by the end of the year.

Terrorism

Let me also remind you that, although we still do not have, as we had hoped, universal agreement on a definition of terrorism, the summit did produce – and this too is a first in the UN's history – a clear, unqualified condemnation, by all Member States, of terrorism “in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes”. This is an important step towards the comprehensive convention on terrorism – which I know is a high priority for the US government, as it is for many other governments, and which all member states have now committed themselves to conclude within the coming year. In addition, the summit agreed on the need for a global counter-terror strategy – based on the elements set out by the Secretary-General when he spoke to the Madrid conference on terrorism last March. I think we all understand that this is an area where it is imperative to have all countries cooperating, not just a few. So this is an area where the UN must deliver, and those most concerned with the threat of terrorism must make the biggest effort to enlist other countries in the common effort.

Development

Finally, let me observe that in the area of economic and social development the summit did not call for specific actions by the UN itself. But it did stimulate important commitments, from both donor and developing nations, to take actions in their own right to advance the Millennium Development Goals adopted five years ago, thereby rolling back poverty and disease, enabling women to play their essential role in development, and also safeguarding our global environment. As a former Administrator of the UN Development Program, I particularly appreciated President Bush's speech to the summit, in which he strongly endorsed the MDGs (as we call them), and also made a potentially historic offer to give poor countries the chance to trade their way out of poverty through a successful Doha Round that would eliminate tariffs on their goods and end unfair agricultural subsidies. In this connection, I would draw your attention also to what Tony Blair said to his party conference yesterday: “When we resume the talks on world trade this December, our job, Europe's job, America's job, is to be on the side of opening the markets of the rich to the poorest of the world.”

So you see, Mr. Chairman, that the summit has given the new session of the General Assembly a great deal of work to do. I think we are lucky to have Jan Eliasson of Sweden – a man known to many of you from his recent term as his country's ambassador to the US – as president of the Assembly during this crucial session. He will have a key role to play in the coming months, helping to steer the process that will have to deliver on the many issues decided but not completed at the summit.

In closing, let me add that I believe one important consequence of the reforms now under way must be to allow Israel to play its full part as a member state in all the UN's affairs, and no longer to be judged by harsher standards than those applied to other member states. As you know, this is something that the Secretary-General has consistently advocated throughout his time in office, and his role was handsomely acknowledged by Israel's foreign minister, Silvan Shalom, when he spoke in the General Assembly last week. I believe it is an encouraging sign of the new atmosphere that Israel's ambassador, Dan Gillerman, has been elected as one of the Assembly's vice-presidents for the current session – the first time this has happened since Abba Eban in the 1950s.

Meanwhile, the UN will of course continue its work, with its partners in the Quartet, for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. The nearer we get to that goal, the more obvious it will be to all UN members that Israel has exactly the same rights as any other state.

But my main message to you this morning is that, while the summit's outcome was a major step forward in several key areas, much work needs to be done to follow it up in the coming weeks and months. And in that work, it goes without saying that constructive US engagement and leadership will continue to be absolutely essential.

We are all grateful for the efforts made by the Administration, particularly the Secretary of State and Ambassador Bolton, that have helped us to come this far. But there is still a tremendous amount of work to be done to get other countries on board to push through the detailed decisions.

I know, Mr. Chairman, that this House has passed a bill bearing your name, intended to ensure that reform of the United Nations moves ahead. I hope it's by now clear that we in the Secretary-General's office fully share that intention. But I hope you might now also understand why we respectfully disagree with the method that you adopted, which mandates withholding of US dues from the United Nations if certain benchmarks and deadlines are not met. I fear that this would provoke a backlash among other member states, whose effect would be not to advance but to set back the priorities that you and we share – such as an effective Human Rights Council, the extensive reform of UN management, a clear definition of terrorism – because it would shatter the pro-reform coalition among UN members.

The key to success, on the contrary, lies in working with, and broadening, the coalition of friends and allies who are already committed to reform. In this effort, the US is an essential player, but by no means the only one. It has to be the work of a coalition, and holding that coalition together is the surest way to success.

To help achieve this we rely on our friends not only in the Administration, but also here in Congress. There is much that you can do in the coming months – in your contacts with foreign leaders and your travels to foreign capitals – to communicate to your friends and allies abroad how serious is the need for UN reform. You can help to energize those who already support reform, and to win over those who are more reluctant. You, after all, have the power of the purse, and that ensures you an attentive audience wherever you go. Please use it to make the case for a stronger, more efficient UN – one that can carry the torch for peace, development and human rights throughout the world.

Thank you very much.